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CONTENTS

● **Zikr-i-Habeeb**
Malfoozat-i-Ahmad

● **Allah is our Lord**
—Ali-bin-Abdul Qa

● **"A Letter to a Friend"**
—K. B. Mohammad Dilawar Kh

● **A Study in Bible—II**
—Peer Salah-ud-D

● **Gleanings and Glimpses**

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

ZIKR-I-HABEEB

Malfoozāt-i-Ahmad

Translated from *Malfoozāt-i-Ahmad*, published by Sh. Abdul Hamid, Railway Auditor, Lahore. Continued from R. R. November, 1942—*Ed.*

June 3, 1901

Commenting upon the Quranic verse لو انزلنا هذا القرآن على جبل لرأيته خاشعا متصدعا من خشية الله the Promised Messiah said :—

One meaning of this verse is that the effect of the Holy Quran upon those who receive it is so powerful that if it had been sent down on a mountain, that mountain would have cracked under it and crumbled up to become level with the ground. Such being its action upon inanimate objects like rocks and stones, those people are indeed very foolish who do not derive any benefit from a factor of such remarkable potency. The other meaning is that no one can win the approval, the pleasure, and the love of God without creating in himself two qualities essential for the purpose. He should in the first place conquer pride and shatter it to pieces as a towering mountain is shattered when it is levelled with the ground; he should get rid of all thoughts of self-importance and go humbly through life. Secondly all bonds and ties and relationships which bind him to things other than God should be broken asunder as pieces of rock fly apart when a mountain breaks to pieces. All such relationships and associations should be given up as are of a

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nature to cause the displeasure of God, and one should love and hate only for the sake of God.

Hazrat Ahmad remarked in another connection that the fact was not without significance that the Holy Prophet had asked his *Salām* to be conveyed to the Promised Messiah. There was in it a grand prophecy that in spite of the evil machinations of his opponents he would remain safe from harm and be successful in his mission. Hazrat Ahmad continued that he could not imagine that the *Salām* sent by the Holy Prophet had no more meaning than an ordinary greeting, for every word the Holy Prophet uttered was pregnant with deeper import.

The conversation happened to turn to law-courts and the way witnesses come under the spell of the court officials and the lawyers, to be overawed by them. Hazrat Ahmad said: In the law-courts witnesses are often overawed to such an extent that they are unable to safeguard the interests they seek to defend; in their confusion words slip from their lips which in the hands of lawyers yield meanings contrary to their purpose, and in many cases lead to injustice. The awe of courts of law, too, is a kind of *Shirk*.

ان الشرك لظلم عظيم

Hazrat continued that some British officers took great pains in determining the truth from falsehood in law-suits which went to them for judgement. Incidentally the Promised Messiah narrated that in the lifetime of his father he was once looking after a case pending in the court of the Commissioner. He said: Only one day before the case was decided the Commissioner was so leniently inclined towards tenants that shutting his eyes to their sharp practices against the interests of proprietors he said openly in the court room that the peasants were very poor people and much oppressed by landlords. That night I saw this officer in a dream. He appeared to me in the form of a child and I placed my hand on his head, as a caress and by way of encouragement. The next day when I attended the court, the Commissioner was a changed man. He sharply reprimanded the tenants concerned in our case and gave his decision in our favour, with costs.

Hazrat Ahmed said: For a judge it is a religious duty that in the suits brought before him he should spare no pains in arriving at the truth so that no valid rights are trampled down through his negligence or carelessness.

If a man did not possess a steadfast and cool temperament, the Promised Messiah remarked further, he could not acquit himself well before the temporal authorities. Then how would he fare when he was called to stand before the King of kings and the Highest of the high, *i.e.*, his Creator and Lord?

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The Promised Messiah said: According to the Torah the seed of adultery is accursed, as also the man who died on the cross. It is very strange that in their eagerness to obtain salvation through atonement the Christians did not hesitate to declare Jesus to have met with an accursed death. Having accepted an accursed death for him, why do they not accept an accursed birth also so that their doctrine of salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus may be doubly consolidated? But the Holy Quran rejects this view and declares that Jesus was born pure and that his death did not take place on the cross as in the case of ordinary criminals.

Hazrat said: A God-fearing man turns his back upon the riches of this world and sets his face towards God, but worldly prosperity runs after him. Worldly men, on the other hand, take great pains in the pursuit of material aims, but they get no real pleasure and no peace. The Companions of the Holy Prophet turned their back upon the world, but the world followed them and heaped its treasures at their feet.

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ALLAH IS OUR LORD

By Ali-bin-Abdul Qadir

The caption of this article would indicate to the reader in some measure that it is taken for granted that Allah does exist. In other words I shall not dwell on the proofs of the existence of the Almighty Allah, as we Muslims believe in Him. I shall adopt this course not because *Islam* does not support the idea of the existence of the Almighty by rational proofs; but because it is not intended to address at present any one among the readers who entertains any doubts, rationally and intellectually, about the existence of the Almighty. With this reservation it may be now indicated at the outset that the person, firstly, and the attributes, secondly, of the Almighty Allah will be the limits of the article.

The foremost question regarding the person of the Divine Being that presents itself to us is "what is the name of the Divine Being?" For, as human beings it is difficult for us to conceive of anything without also giving it a name. And I can say with confidence that no religion other than Islam has given mankind a word to indicate the person of the Divine Being; *i.e.* knowledge of the personal name of the Almighty has been given to mankind only in Islam. Other religions, for instance Christianity, Budhism, and Zoroastarianism, do not mention the Divine Being by a personal name. By whatever names they mention Him, those are only words with some meaning other than the Divine person, and have been applied to Him with reference only to some of His attributes. The Jews called Him Jehovah which means the "Descending one," or a Being which reveals himself to man. Clearly enough, this is an attributive and not a personal name. Another, a more probable and better meaning of Jehovah is يَهْوَ "O, the one who exists." In this sense also Jehovah falls much short of a personal name. Nearer home, in India the Almighty has been called "Permeshwar" and "Permatma," which words respectively mean "The Great Ishwar" and the "Great Atma", indicating thereby that they refer to one of a class of such beings, differing from the others of its class only in being greater than the others. The several meanings of the words Atma and Ishwar in the Sanskirt language bear ample testimony to the truth of what I have said.

Now, Allah is the name which Islam uses for the Divine Person. There is no secrecy about this name like the secrecy

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and aloofness that the Jews maintained about Jehovah. This name is proclaimed from house-tops, and five times in every twenty-four hours it is called out from the minaret of the mosque. This name is the protection of the babe and the strength of the warrior. It is the solace of the sick and the comfort of the dying. It is not a compound word. It is a proper noun, a name indicating the person of the Almighty to whom all attributes belong, and is never applied to deities and objects of worship other than Him.

It cannot be impressed too strongly upon the reader that the central idea in the Islamic concept of the person of Allah is that He is one, He is indivisible in person and in attributes, and He is not made up of component parts. Allah, our Lord, is All-comprehending, and to say that there can be more than one God is to say in other words that none of them is All-comprehending, for there cannot be more than one such All-comprehending Being. Polytheism is thus logically repugnant to our concept of the Divine Person. In Muslim terminology Polytheism is called *Shirk*, which literally means the setting up of equals, associates, or partners with Allah ; and thus it has more meaning in it than the word Polytheism alone signifies. But to define what actually constitutes *shirk* is difficult for it embraces various beliefs, actions, and rituals. A better course for us leading to more definite results would be to enumerate those beliefs and actions which fall within the category of *shirk*, and thus to obtain a definition by enumeration rather than by description. Such a step is necessitated by the fact that we find many peoples and communities claiming to be monotheists, who in spite of this claim do habitually resort to beliefs and practices which, from the Islamic viewpoint, are repugnant in essence to their claim. The reason is that those peoples and communities are not aware of what does really constitute *shirk*, or Polytheism. *Shirk* is thus not an easy thing to define, and we shall do well, as I have indicated, to enumerate those classes of beliefs and practices, or rituals which constitute *shirk*. That will serve to clear up the position more than a mere descriptive definition. To begin with :—

1. First, it is *shirk* to believe that there are more Beings than one, equally omnipotent and perfect in themselves and all having a share in the control and government of this universe. The belief in the existence of a God the Father, and another God the son, is a polytheistic belief, and in Muslim terminology it is *shirk*, and an unlawful belief.

2. Secondly it is *shirk* to believe that there are several governing Powers of this universe, among whom different attributes, and functions are separately allocated, and every one of them is individually ruling in his own sphere. Thus to believe in the existence of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu as three distinct functionaries of the Divine Being, is a Polytheis-

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tic idea, a *shirk*, and is unlawful in Islam. Not so to say that God is the Creator (Brahma) and the Sustainer (Vishnu) and also the Destroyer (Shiva). For in that case all these attributes are given to one and the same person. The test is whether or not when praying to the Creator, Brahma, the devotee believes that the person of the Creator is the same as that of the Preserver, (Shiva) and of the Destroyer (Vishnu). If he does so believe the idea is not *shirk*; otherwise it is. The Holy Quran repudiates the above two classes of *shirk* by a clear, brief and yet very full argument. It says,

لوكان فيهما آلهة الا الله لفسدتا

"Were there more gods than one, they would have fallen out." (xxi : 22)

3. Thirdly it is *shirk* to render to others those homages which symbolise extreme humility and worship, and which are fit to be rendered only to the Highest of all Beings, the Almighty Allah. To fold the two hands, or to prostrate one's self, before any one other than Allah is *shirk*, and unlawful for a Muslim. It is logical to infer that when we meet out the same respect to two persons we hold them sub-consciously equals in our esteem. And in order that a distinction might be maintained between Himself and others, Allah has set apart these symbols of humility, worship, and supplication exclusively for Himself.

4. Fourthly it is *shirk* to believe that physical causes are vested with a final control, and are sufficient to bring about a desired end. Instances in point are to believe that by taking bread hunger is bound to be satisfied, or to say that clothes must of necessity protect us from the rigours of climate, or that by adopting prophylactic measures diseases can be guaranteed against. For, in such beliefs the last authority and final dispensation which belongs to Allah has been shifted to physical causes. But the belief that Allah has endowed these physical causes with such properties that they may produce the desired result if He so wills and dispenses is not *shirk*.

5. Fifthly it is *shirk* to invest any person with the attributes and powers which Allah has reserved to Himself, *e.g.* to bring the dead back to life, or to create something, or to be eternal and immune from destruction.....powers and attributes which mark out the person of Allah distinct from all others. It is *shirk* to obliterate this distinction even if one believes that Allah has out of His free will parted with these attributes, or parts of them, in favour of other person or persons. For such a transference of the Divine attributes is not possible. The belief of the Muslim masses that Jesus of Nazareth is still alive in this corporal state, and is up to now immune from فنا (destruction), and has dispensed with the necessity of eating, drinking and such like human needs, and is to live indefinitely

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in this state so long as to amount almost to an eternal life, or that he had the power to bring the dead back to life, or to create some animals, chief of whom is the bat.....such a belief about Jesus amounts to *shirk*, and it is a pity that even the Muslims who have the purest form of monotheistic religion should have succumbed to such a belief.

6. Sixthly, to disregard entirely those physical causes which Allah has created as means to the bringing about of certain results, and to believe that any person or thing can achieve those results without the natural means to them, merely by his or its volition, are also *shirk*. In our country we see many *faqirs* and *sadhus* who sometimes frighten the common people by saying that they would set those persons, or their belongings, or their houses ablaze without actually lighting a fire or by adopting the natural means, to burn merely at their command. To believe that these Fakirs and Sadhus can do so, and can thus contravene the law of nature is *shirk*, and is an instance in point. To believe, however, in mesmeric effects by which it is possible to make a man unconscious, or to harden the limbs, or to anæsthetise the nerves, is not *shirk* for such mesmeric effects are part of a law of nature which the Almighty Allah has promulgated in this world.

7. Seventhly, this also is *shirk* to believe that Allah has so much love or regard for anybody that all his prayers are answered. For such a belief to amount to *shirk* it is not necessary to go to the length of believing that person to be a deity. He may be regarded as a servant of Allah and an ordinary mortal. But to believe that he is in a position to commandeer his wishes from Allah amounts to *shirk*.

8. Eighthly, it is *shirk* to believe that a certain object or person has any control over certain dispensations while Allah has given that thing or person no control. Thus to believe that the dead have any say in the affairs of this world is *shirk*. To take an extreme instance where the palpability of this kind of *shirk* may be quite apparent I shall say that it is not *shirk* to believe that Mr. Churchill is now-a-days the Premier of Great Britain. But to believe that George III still wields a hand in the formation of the British Cabinet is *shirk*. Thus also Krishna (peace be on him) is dead and to believe that even now he has a say in the affairs of this world is *shirk*. Praying to rivers, mountains, saints, idols, and the like is for the same reason to be classed as *shirk*. For these objects have no control over, nor any say in the dispensations of this world of ours.

9. Ninthly, some actions fall within the category of Shirk for the reason that they take their birth in some Polytheistic belief. A man may not believe that the dead have any control over the affairs of this world, yet he is guilty of *shirk* if he lights a lamp on a tomb. The reason is that the practice of lighting lamps on tombs had its origin in the belief that the

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dead did often visit their mausoleums and whoever they found had taken good care of their tombs they betowed some favour on him or granted his prayers. The practice of lighting lamps on tombs, though it may now be continued merely as a habit or custom, tends to keep alive this original belief and is, therefore, classed as *shirk*.

10. Tenthly, and lastly, it is *shirk* to esteem, revere, respect, or love in the heart any person or object equally with, or more than the person of the Almighty Allah. It is no matter whether this person or object be a near relation such as a father or a mother, or even some abstract object like one's nation, or a social cause, or an art or science.

The above I believe to be the most exhaustive list of Polytheistic beliefs and practices as viewed from the Islamic stand point, and this enumeration will help us to fully understand what constitutes Polytheism as we Muslims regard it. A question naturally arises at this stage as to why is *shirk* regarded as an unpardonable sin when it is such a fine and minute affair and it is not possible for every man to grasp it fully. The answer is that by calling *shirk* an unpardonable sin we only mean that it differs from other moral sins in that a person guilty of *shirk* cannot escape punishment in the life to come. That is the meaning of the Quranic verse

ان‌الله لايغفر ان يشرك به و يغفر ما دون ذالك (iv : 43)

Not that even a true and heartfelt repentance cannot obtain forgiveness for *shirk*. On the contrary, according to Islam there is no sin which a truly repentant sinner is not forgiven. But that *shirk* which has not been repented of and abjured shall be punished while an offence against any other moral precept may without punishment be pardoned. Of course this rule applies to *shirk-i-jali* only *i e.* those classes of *shirk* which are open and transparent. *shirk-i-khafi*, *i.e.* those that are latent will be treated differently. If anybody is guilty of *shirk-i-khafi* unknowingly, and he had the intention and motive not to commit the offence, he may be pardoned without any punishment. The reason for treating *shirk-i-jali* separately from other moral sins is this that while other moral, transgressions, being balanced by some other excellences of a man, may not prove a bar to his spiritual progress and may thus be over looked, *shirk-i-jali* does prove an hinderance to a man's spiritual progress and is too preposterous a transgression against the person of Allah to be balanced by his other moral excellences, however great. He has to undergo some punishment for this offence in the next world, if he does not abjure it in this, after which alone can he be reclaimed to a free and true communion with his Creator.

Why is *shirk* or Polytheism so repugnant to the Islamic ideal of an ethical standard? The reasons are four-fold.

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I. Firstly Polytheism transgresses the jealousy (غیرت) of Allah. He does not like that His attributes be divided between Himself and others. It may be added in passing that the presence of jealousy in the Divine Person does not in any way derogate from His excellences and perfection. For jealousy, properly placed, is also one of those attributes of which the presence is necessary in a Being which is perfect and complete in every way.

II. Secondly, Allah's mercy and kindness towards men make him forbid Shirk so strongly. If people believe in other gods besides Allah, out of imbecility they will remain content with the worship of the lower deities, as most Polytheistic peoples do remain so content, and they will not strive for their spiritual uplift and a true communion with Allah.

III. Thirdly, Polytheistic beliefs diminish a man's love for God and thus make him unmindful of the object of his creation, because Polytheism brings forward so many barriers and intermediaries between man and his Creator, while the truth is that Allah has created man that he should attain to a free and direct communion with Him, and transform himself into a replica of the Divine attributes. This is what the Holy Quran indicates in the verse ما خلقت الجن والانس الا ليعبدون

IV. Fourthly, Polytheism produces cowardice, untruthfulness, and ignorance, and Allah does not like that man should be smeared with these vices. Polytheism produces untruthfulness because it assigns certain attributes to some objects or persons which in reality are not endowed with those attributes. It produces ignorance because man fails to derive benefit from certain objects which God created for his benefit but he begins to look upon those objects not as subservient to him but as his Masters and Lords. Polytheism produces cowardice because man begins to adore and fear those objects *e.g.* rivers, mountains and animals from which he has no cause for fear. Further, it cramps a man's vision, and outlook, and lowers down his ambition and goal. For a Mushrik believes that he cannot reach up to God without the aid of intermediaries, while in fact he has had no need of them.

The Holy Quran adopts a very practical attitude in refuting Polytheism. It puts the direct question "Are those whom you worship besides Allah possessed of the attributes of Allah? Do these idols, Autars, rivers and animals before whom you bow down in supplication and submission—do they have power to create, cause death, bestow children, or relieve your pains and sufferings? If they do have these powers, there can be no objection to worshipping them.

But if they do not have these powers, and they certainly do not have them, where is the point in worshipping them? All authority is in Allah, our Lord, who has not parted with

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His attributes and omnipotence. If it is however suggested that these other objects do also have Divine Powers, proof must be adduced to that effect, for this is a suggestion contrary to nature and truth.

These are the lines on which the Holy Quran in several places refutes Shirk ; it says for instance :—

> You do not worship beside Him but names which you have yourself named, you and your forefathers ; Allah has not sent down any authority for them ; the final control is only with Allah ; He has commanded that you shall not worship aught but Him ; This is the right religion, but most people do not know (12 : 40).
>
> Again :
>
> This is the creation of Allah ; but show me what those beside Him have created. (xxxi : 11)
>
> Also :
>
> Nay, He Who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down for you water from clouds ; then We cause to grow thereby beautiful gardens ; it is not possible for you that you should make the trees thereof to grow. Is there a god with Allah ? Nay ! they are a people who deviate.
>
> Or, Who made the earth a resting-place, and made in it rivers, and raisd on it mountains, and placed between the two seas a barrier. Is there a god with Allah ? Nay most of them do not know !
>
> Or, Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil, and He will make you successors in the earth. Is there a god with Allah ? Little is that you mind !
>
> Or, Who guides you in utter darkness of the land and the sea, and Who sends the winds as good news before His mercy. Is there a god with Allah ? Exalted be Allah above what they associate (with him).
>
> Or, Who originates the creation, then reproduces it and Who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth. Is there a god with Allah ? Say : Bring your proof if you are truthful.
>
> Say : No one in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen but Allah ; and they do not know when they shall be raised.
>
> Nay, their knowledge respecting the hereafter is slight and hasty ; Nay, they are in doubt about it ; they are quite blind to it.

It will not be out of place here if we briefly enter into a discussion of the doctrine of Incarnation as Islam looks upon it. By Incarnations of the Divine Person or Avtars I refer to

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those objects, men or animals, who are supposed to be Incarnations of the Divine Being. Jesus, according to the Christian claim of his Divinity, will also to some extent be regarded as falling in this category. Islam clearly rejects the idea of the Divinity of such persons, and regards this belief as Polytheistic and Shirk. The reasons are the same as are applied to the refutation of the Divinity of other idols and gods and goddesses, that these Avtars are not possessed of any divine attributes nor are they free from the failings and weaknesses of their own kind from which failings and weaknesses Allah is free. Two other arguments may further be adduced in this connection :—

First, it is admitted on all hands that an Avtar has the form and body and natural propensities of that class of beings to which he belongs, *e.g.*, if the Avtar is a man he has the body and qualities of human beings, or if he is an animal like a fish or a crocodile he has the form and body of a fish or a crocodile. Now in the natural course of Evolution the soul of a man is born out of the life-germ which is also the nucleus of his physical body. His soul is nothing extraneous to his body and does not creep into him from outside. It takes birth in the evolutionary processes of his physical birth and is born within him. That is what Islam teaches us and what we observe in nature. To suggest otherwise is to affirm something contrary to nature and Evolution. And the burden of proof is on those who so affirm. They have to show how on earth the son of a woman came to have not the same type of soul as his parents had, being born out of their life-germs, but had the soul of the Divine Being ; or how could the offspring of a fish have not the soul of a fish but that of the Divine Being. Clearly the position is untenable unless it is also suggested that the corporal body of these Avtars is also the body of the Divine Being which is an absurd supposition.

Secondly, we find that there is no physical or material body without also a person in it, which allow me to call the absolute reality embodied in that physical form. Let us take for instance an orange. It is not the colour, the peel, or the juice that we call an orange. The orange is also not a mere mathematical summation of all these but is something more, which let me call the person of the orange. Similarly let us take a man named Joseph. Now when we refer to the man Joseph we do not refer to the body of Joseph but to his person, his being. The body of Joseph at seven years of age was not the same body which he later had as a young man, or which he now has as an old man. But Joseph at seven years of age, during youth, and now in old age is one and the same person, a distinct individual and being. If Joseph be now taken for an Avtar, there may be a possibility of his being so if it be also suggested that there are two beings, two personalities in the body of Joseph, one of a

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man, and another of the Divine Being; for, otherwise, it is impossible for us, as I have just indicated, to think of a human body without also a human soul in it, or for that matter, to think of a body without also a corresponding individuality, and person of that body. If it be suggested that there are two persons in the physical body of an Avtar, the question arises, "*which of the two persons in the body of the Avtar is possessed of control over him*, and how about it in the case of a conflict between the two?" It is impossible to solve the problem in any way, and further it assumes a supposition which is not subscribed to by the believers in the doctrine of Divine Incarnation, and which also does not stand to reason. Nor does the position improve by suggesting as some do that it is not the Divine Soul or Spirit in the Avtars but the Divine Intellect. For the question whether there be two souls in the body of the Avtar will resolve itself into "whether there be two intellects in the head of the Avtar", and weaknesses in the Doctrine of Incarnation will not thereby be remedied.

It is also interesting to note that Avtarship is always ascribed to men of by-gone days. The latest Avtar for the purposes of our discussion is Jesus according to the Christian claim of his Divinity, and is about two thousand years old. The lack of historical evidence regarding these Avtars, makes it doubtful if these persons at all claimed to be Incarnations of the Divine Being. Jesus never claimed that, nor did he claim Divinity for himself. Similarly it is possible to say without fear of contradiction that no authentic proof will be forthcoming to the effect that the other Avtars did themselves claim to be Incarnations of the Divine Person. Avtarship has been ascribed to them rather than has been claimed by them.

After discussing at some length the unity of the Divine Person, now let us discuss briefly some other aspects of His person. Allah, our Lord, in his person is the supreme Being to whom all attributes belong. He is one and indivisible, and is complete and perfect in His Being. He is not limited, bounded or circumscribed in any way. He pervades the entire space, and space cannot enclose Him nor can time set a limit to Him. He is so near to us and is yet so far, and is so far from us and yet so near. He has no form, for a form limits a body, and Allah is above all limits. We cannot grasp or comprehend His person completely through our intellect, and yet He exists.

Lest we should doubt His existence through not being able to comprehend His person completely Allah has concealed the essence of all truths and realities from our intellectual eye. Take for instance our own selves, we do not know what exactly we are, and yet we exist: we have qualities, attributes, feelings, and passions, and so many perceptible aspects and forces of our lives. The existence of Allah cannot, therefore, be called to doubt because of our failure to comprehend Him completely.

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The question then is how far can we understand or comprehend Him, with our limited intellect, Him who is the most ethereal and subtle of all beings? The Holy Quran answers this question very briefly, and very fully.

It says:

لا تدركه الابصار وهو يدرك الابصار وهو اللطيف الخبير (الانعام ع ۱۳)

Knowledge cannot encompass Him but He circumscribes knowledge, and He is subtle and knowing.

In other words He consoles us that while we looked at our limited capabilities we should not despair of reaching up to Him. For even though we cannot reach up to Him it is He who will come to us.

How does Allah reach up to us? It is the constant flow of the Divine attributes through which we perceive the Being of Allah. His attributes are always operative in this universe. They touch us in every sphere of our lives, and every moment they demonstrate before our eyes that He is a living and omnipotent God.

The next relevant question is "What are Divine Attributes?" Islam teaches us that Divine Attributes are those names of Allah by which the relationship between Him and His creation is expressed. They describe the divine person in those aspects of the perfections of His Being in which He approaches man and His other creation. The Quran says:—

He is Allah beside Whom there is no God; the King, the Holy, the Author of peace, the Granter of security, Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every greatness, Glory be to Allah from what they set up with Him.

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most excellent names; whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; and He is the Mighty and the Wise. (lix: 23-24)

This does not exhaust His attributes, which have been mentioned elsewhere too in the Quran. A few others are

سميع، عليم، بصير، حى، قيوم، صمد، غفور، قهار، وهاب، قدير،

Nor do these exhaust the list. The common belief among the Muslims that He has 99 attributes does not mean that He has no more. In fact just as there can be no limit to His person, so can there be no limit to His attributes; and our knowledge extends to those attributes only which bear a relation to us in this our earthly life. In support of this view I quote a tradition from the sayings of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him')

"Allah, I pray to Thee in all Thy attributes that Thou hast chosen for Thyself, and those that Thou hast revealed

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in Thy Book, and those that Thou hast taught to any one of Thy creation, and those that Thou hast kept to Thyself and hast not given to any one else the knowledge of them."

Of the attributes of Allah it is not correct to say that some are superior or contradictory to some others. For every divine attribute operates in its own sphere. True, the sphere of operation of some of His attributes is larger than the sphere of some others.

Allah says رحمتی وسعت کل شیئ (vii : 156)

His mercy encompasses every object, and the sphere of operation of this attribute is perhaps the largest. But in no case is it possible to say that this attribute, or any other attribute for that matter, clashes with any other attribute.

In the end it is proper to tell the reader of one attribute of the Divine Person which has been claimed for Him by Islam alone in very clear and unambiguous terms. That attribute is that He speaks to man. No religion has so staunchly put forward this claim for Allah as has Islam. Allah, our Lord, speaks to man. That speech is not a mere thought, an inspiration unclothed in words, a mere passing whim. It is clear, distinct, unmistakable, and mighty speech. The recepient of the Divine words hears them as we men hear one another. This is what in Muslim terminology is meant by الہام or وحی *i.e.* Revelation. The most perfect and the most accurate record of Divine speech is the Quran, which is not a collection of the sayings of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as most non-Muslims regard it, but every word of it has been spoken by Allah to the Holy Prophet. And let me give you the glad tiding that this Divine attribute, like all other attributes, is eternal, and has not ceased to function at any time in the past, nor will it be discontinued after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allah speaks today, as He spoke yesterday, and shall again speak tomorrow. As He had sent His messengers in by-gone days so He has sent to you also a messenger from Himself. The name of this messenger is Ahmad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He was born at Qadian, and claimed to be an Apostle of Allah unto modern times.

In his writings he says :—

آنچہ من بشنوم زوحی خدا بخدا پاک دانمش ز خطا
ہمچو قرآن منزہ اش دانم از خطا ها ہمیں ست ایمانم

.....

.....

.....

لیک آئینہ ام ز رب غنی از پے صورت مہ مدنی

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And he also says :—

آن خدائے کہ ازو خلق و جہـان بے خبر اند
برمن او جـلوہ نمود ست گر اهلی بپذیر

Let him hear who has got ears to hear.

و آخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمین

Note.—The entire article is based on the book هستی باری تعالے by Hazrat Ameerulmomenin, which has been freely used.

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"A LETTER TO A FRIEND"

This letter was written by K. B. Mohammad Dilawar Khan to a friend. We are grateful to him for permission to reproduce it here as the points raised in it are of common interest and great importance—*Ed.*

MY DEAR FRIEND

Perhaps you will say that the writer of the letter is a religious maniac and if you will accuse me of this you will not be much on the wrong. But I write to you this letter for reasons which are self-explanatory and to none else can I remember to have written any such letter. To you I write this letter because I have found in you a seeker after truth who always professes to friends that the salvation of Muslims lies in their treading faithfully on the path chalked out for their guidance by God. True. But are you truly prepared to listen to God? The Meccans of yore lived for years with the holy Prophet of their age but failed to listen to him and found his teachings most unpalatable. This will show that 'guidance' is not something that you can acquire by your efforts. It is a gift from God and is bestowed upon those who humbly and lowly seek for it. The promised world reformer came in our time and after firmly establishing the foundation of his mission passed away, but this "monstrous, dead and unprofitable world" failed to listen to him and hearing his voice failed to respond. It was about him that the Holy Prophet had said, "How shall my followers perish when I am in the beginning and Jesus son of Mary is at the end"? Now Hazrat Sahib of Qadian was given the title of "Jesus son of Mary" because the Muslims of the 13th century were given the title of "Jews" by the Holy Prophet on account of their transgression and having gone astray from the path of Islam. This world reformer would not have been given this title of "Jesus son of Mary" if the Prophet had not called the Muslims of 13th century as like unto "Jews". Just as the Jews became corrupt and went astray in the 13th century after Moses, so became the Muslims in the 13th century after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Hence the reformer was called "Jesus son of Mary."

Now I again enquire, have you ever prayed to God, humbly and lowly, to guide you to the Promised Messiah who came to give us life? How shall God guide you if you would not ask for it and will not seek for it. For instance I gave you "Dawat-ul-Amir" and you promised to read the whole of it. Have you done so? The book is with you for the last good many months. Please remember, already you have spent a good many years of

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your life and you do not know how much more you will live on. If Hazrat Sahib of Qadian is the same "Jesus son of Mary" that was promised to us and you have not had the good fortune to be in his fold you are a terrible loser. Therefore make good to come under the banner of this great hero of Islam. He invites you in the following words.

"Blessed are those who believed in me. I am the last path in the paths of the Lord and am the last light in the lights of the Lord. He who deserts me, deserts the Lord, for without me all is obscure." Elsewhere he says: "I am the fortified castle of this age. He who enters my walls is protected from thieves, robbers and ravenous beasts, but he that remains outside my walls is in danger and even his corpse will not be safe." Now if the writer of these passages is appointed by God to save humanity from the physical and spiritual disaster that has overtaken mankind, surely those who remain outside his fold incur the displeasure of the Lord. Is it obedience to the will of God that we should say to this reformer, our very saviour, "We know not who you are, we elect to remain outside the fold you claim to have built for our salvation." Thus have been doomed the past generations when they rejected the call of a warner from the Lord.

The Ahmadies of our time are few in number, perhaps not more than a million, scattered all over the globe. They are not respected in society on account of their creed but it is the promise of God that they will spread all over the globe and this will take about 300 years from the start of the movement—certainly not a long time for this kind of movement. So were the followers of the Holy Prophet looked upon with hatred and rediculed and laughed at. Such was the case with every prophet and his followers. But our children of children will send blessings upon us and will be proud of us. But this is a far off spectacle and I wish I could show it to your visible eyes even now. I could see kingdom after kingdom entering the fold of Ahmad of Qadian and the earth full of his followers as it is to-day full of his unbelievers. To-day he is despised and his followers are spurned. But the day is not distant when the banner of Ahmad, this hero of Islam, will be seen widespread, and mankind will no longer refuse to peal to his oracular voice. I conclude with the following Quranic verse: "Those who endeavour to find Our way shall certainly find them out."

With profound best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Muhammad Dilawar Khan.

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A STUDY IN BIBIE—II

Miscalculations

(Continued from previous issue)

III. Exodus 38 ; 25, 26 reads as follows:—

"And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and three score and fifteen shekels, after the shekels of the sanctuary :

"A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel after the shekel of sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fity men".[1]

These verses show that (during the census of the children of Israil taken by Moses) whereas half a shekel of silver was taken from every one who was twenty years old or upwards, the silver thus recovered from 6,3550 persons was 1775 shekels, only. This evidently is quite wrong. Either the total number of persons from whom silver was recovered was $1775 \times 2 = 3550$ and not 6,3550, or the silver recovered was $6,3550 \div 2 = 3,1775$ and not 1775.

Conversely, either figure 3 escaped the Divine pen when describing the total shekels of silver as 1775 instead of 3,1775 ; or the Divine pen has inadvertently added figure 6 when describing the total number of persons as 6,3550 instead of 3550.

If the number mentioned in Exodus (and Numbers) had been in figures we could have described it as "just a slip of the Divine pen", but the fact that they are mentioned in letters shows that there has been a gross error.

TO ERR IS HUMAN. BUT FOR A FULL BENCH OF THREE GODS TO ERR IS A PITY.

SALAH-UD-DIN

1. In Numbers 1 : 20 to 43 the totals of the numbers of the twelve different houses of Israil are mentioned separately and their aggregate total is mentioned in verse 46 as "six hundred thousand and three thousand five hundred and fifty men."

This agrees with the total mentioned in Exodus.

It is however significant that in Numbers although there are greater details about the census there is no mention of the fact that half a shekel of silver was recovered from every one and that the total silver thus recovered was 1775 or 31775 shekels.

Is it due to the fact that the author of Numbers does not want to come into conflict with Exodus? and does it not show that he is certainly somebody other than the author of Exodus?

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GLEANINGS AND GLIMPSES

Christian Civilization and the War

The following letter was addressed by the President of the Rationalist Press Association, Surgeon Rear-Admiral C. M. Beadnell, to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Richard Law, M.P., on October 26:—

Sir,—As President of the Rationalist Press Association I was very much interested in your replies to Mr. Sorensen's question in the House of Commons on October 13 and to Earl Winterton's protest on October 22 regarding the official use of the phrase "Christian civilization" to describe the aims of the United Nations.

The justification of this practice appears to be based upon the contention that in defining the objectives of the United Nations as Christian objectives, representatives of His Majesty's Government are not maintaining that these objectives are exclusively Christian. The word "Christian" however, is essentially an exclusive term *To believe in Christianity is inevitably to believe that all non-Christian religions are false. To declare that the United Nations are fighting for Christian civilization is logically equivalent to asserting that they are not fighting for any kind of non-Christian civilization.* To argue, as did Sir Samuel Hoare, that the Post-War settlement should be based on a revival of "Christian brotherhood" is to signify that non-Christians are beyond the pale. If these implications are not apparent to Christians they are certainly quite clear to adherents of religions classed by Christians as "heathen."

In further support of your argument you asserted that "when statesmen of the United Nations speak of the deep spiritual issues of the war they can only speak in terms of their own religion." Are our statesmen, then, incapable of recognizing or appreciating any religion but their own? Is Premier Stalin compelled to express the great purpose of the United Nations in terms of Atheism? The fallacy of the assertion is, however, fully revealed by your own subsequent observation, that the case of the United Nations is "common to all the great religions." You would have been amply justified in going further, since the ideals upheld by the United Nations are pursued by people who stand outside the great religions or are, as in the case of Rationalists, opposed to all forms of supernatural religion.

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I would also remind you that when our Prime Minister and the President of the United States met to formulate the aims of the United Nations they did not find it necessary to use Christian terms. There is not a word about Christianity in the Atlantic Charter, and religion is mentioned solely for the purpose of declaring the principle of complete freedom of conscience and expression. The unreserved welcome which the Charter received in Russia, China, Turkey, and elsewhere can be attributed in large measure to the absence of any reference to a particular religion. You cannot fail to realize, I submit, that if the phrase " Christian civilization " and " Christian brotherhood " had appeared in the Atlantic Charter grave embarrassment would have been encountered in more than one vital quarter.

You opened your reply to Lord Winterton with the words: " There is general misunderstanding about this question." May I point out that Government spokesmen like Lord Halifax and Sir Samuel Hoare are alone responsible for any misunderstanding? Ordinary folk must be forgiven if they assume that when our Ambassadors speak to the world on grave issues they weigh their words and mean precisely what they say. How can all sorts and conditions of people in all parts of the world be expected to know that an Ambassador who says " Christian civilization " means " civilization common to all the great religions "? The protests recently published by the leading Turkish newspapers in this connection demonstrated the deplorable effect upon our allies and friends of selecting a particular religion as the symbol of the United Nations. Hardly less deplorable is the effect within our own Commonwealth, where, as you yourself pointed out, Christians are in a minority.

Let me conclude with a word of admonition for the gallant attempt you made to buttress a position which is indefensible alike in logic and in statecraft. The thought was surely present in your mind that " misunderstandings " must arise and the spirit of religious contention aroused so long as public men speaking for the Government omit to follow the example set by the Prime Minister when he drafted the Atlantic Charter and by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when he chose the phrase " a moral basis " instead of the one you were called upon to defend. Is it too much to expect that for the future our representatives should be counselled to define the aims of the United Nations in the terms which the United Nations have adopted, and not in terms of their personal religious creeds?

—*The Literary Guide*, Dec. 1942.

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